



Tamarack Water Alliance Community Zoom Meeting Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10am CT

Hello from the Tamarack Water Alliance! If you are new to our email list we welcome you. Local residents who volunteer with Tamarack Water Alliance compile and send this monthly newsletter to share updates, invitations, and informational articles.

Everyone is invited to attend our open community virtual Zoom meeting on **Wednesday, August 7, 2024 at 10am CT. Topic: Consultation and Trust Responsibility with Kelly Applegate, Commissioner of the Natural Resources with Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.** The Mille Lacs Band's Water Over Nickel campaign demonstrates strong opposition to Talon Metals proposed Tamarack Nickel mine project in the 1855 Treaty Territory. Covering state and federal responsibility Kelly will discuss the Trust responsibility held by the federal government to the Mille Lacs Band as a Trust beneficiary and how relations are strained when federal entities provide Talon Metals with millions of dollars for exploration when the environmental review process has just begun.

Register for the meeting and receive the Zoom link [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/php/eventreg.php?eid=16)
(<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/php/eventreg.php?eid=16>)

Download Tamarack Water Alliance fact sheets/flyers [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html#flyers)
(<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html#flyers>)

Sign-Up To Receive Updates from the DNR on Talon Metals Environmental Impact Statement here [here](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/tamarack-nickel-project.html) (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/tamarack-nickel-project.html>)

If you believe nickel-sulfide mining is too risky in Aitkin County, Tamarack Water Alliance has yard signs with this messaging available. Your \$6 donation helps defray costs. Email waters@tamarackwateralliance.org to arrange pickup of your sign.

Volunteer with the Tamarack Water Alliance. Send us an [email](mailto:waters@tamarackwateralliance.org) at waters@tamarackwateralliance.org.

Encourage your friends, family and neighbors to [sign up for the monthly Tamarack Water Alliance email](http://eepurl.com/hOboEb) newsletter at <http://eepurl.com/hOboEb>.

Consultation and Trust Responsibility

Comments from Kelly Applegate, Commissioner of Natural Resources with Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Water Over Nickel Campaign

Kelly Applegate states in a video for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe's Water Over Nickel campaign that the band

"supports the transition to a green economy so we are very much for transitioning away from the use of fossil fuels and reducing carbon use in our environment but not in a way that compromises our way of life or how we've always existed with our known resources here- these are part of our culture that are very important to our way of being-our sacred rice, our water, our medicine, our plants, these are at all stake from the dangers of nickel mining and this is why we're concerned. There's no evidence that these mines can operate safely and even after abandonment there's still risk of high levels of pollution going into the environment . Even the EPA identifies metal mining as the most toxic industry in America so its really trading one form of pollution for another."

...While Talon Metals has kept the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe informed of its mining plans it has not engaged in formal tribal consultation efforts with Band leaders, according to Kelly Applegate....

"The federal government's role is as a trustee to tribes" Applegate says "that means that the federal government has the duty and the responsibility to protect our forever homelands, the little we have left, from threats like this."

But Applegate does find it ironic that in some respects the nation's energy transition is being

loaded on the backs of tribal people. A recent study found that resources for critical minerals are overwhelmingly located near reservations and lands sacred to indigenous people. [The report says](#) 97% of nickel, 89% of copper, 79% of lithium and 68% of cobalt reserves and resources in the U.S. are located within 35 miles of Native American reservations...

“That’s a huge environmental justice concern,” says Applegate. “That’s not fair to tribal nations, to put this type of industry right in their backyards when we rely on clean water and are interconnected with the land, and all the resources we depend on are all there. The threat of pollution in such a way that we may not be able to use it the same way again, it’s very alarming.”...

Applegate points out that some car manufacturers are turning to other resources for batteries. Lithium iron phosphate, called LFP, is commonly used in China, and it uses materials that are cheaper and easier to source than nickel and cobalt. Tesla now uses LFP batteries for its cheaper models....

Applegate is also convinced the mine will eventually expand. *“They’ve applied for permits beyond that zone of exploration that they were originally looking at. So, it’s slowly becoming a massive project, it would be there forever, and who’s going to babysit it after closure?”*

[Read more here](http://www.agatmag.com/2024/06/underground-and-out-of-mind/) at <http://www.agatmag.com/2024/06/underground-and-out-of-mind/>

Alternatives Urged

For Applegate and the Mille Lacs Band, the risk is not worth the reward.

Sulfide minerals such as nickel exposed to water and oxygen create acid, and the possibilities to alter water chemistry is too risky for the Band to look beyond..

“Wild rice is literally our cultural identity, and it’s a species that is extremely sensitive to water chemistry,” Applegate said. “To think of that being threatened is unfathomable for us. We can’t allow that to happen. That’s just too high of a risk to lose the ability to harvest rice and harvest our medicinal plants and animals and fish the way we have done for millennia. It would be one of the greatest travesties that have ever happened to our people.”

Additionally, the Band cites 97 percent of the country’s nickel as being located within 35 miles of Native American reservations.

“When we talk about environmental justice, is that fair?” he said. “Especially for our indigenous communities that have a special relationship to the earth and its resources.”

Applegate said mineral extraction ignores “low-hanging fruit” such as recycling minerals from electronics in landfills and alternatives such as sodium ion batteries.

“There really should be a lot more emphasis on looking at alternatives to mining,” he said. Malan countered. “We can’t help where Mother Nature puts the high-grade nickel,” he said. “But we can change where we process it or any tailings that have to be stored.”...

Last September, the Department of Defense gave Talon Metals \$20.6 million to fund exploration to discover more high-grade nickel...The federal support for Talon metals was a blow to the Mille Lacs Band...

“We like to work cooperatively, and in a good way with our federal and state partners,” Applegate said. “In an instance like that, we would have liked to have been consulted before money is being awarded to a proposed project that isn’t even permitted yet. That is a big concern for us.”

He said the Band has reached out to the U.S. Department of Energy, with plans to do the same for the Defense Department.

[Read more](https://www.pineknotnews.com/story/2024/06/07/news/a-look-at-the-tamarack-mine/11280.html) here at <https://www.pineknotnews.com/story/2024/06/07/news/a-look-at-the-tamarack-mine/11280.html>



Check Out & Share Mille Lacs Water Over Nickel billboards at these locations. Safely snap a photo when you spot one and tag Mille Lacs.

Use #WaterOverNickel

- Bennettville (Aitkin): Hwy 169 3.8 mi n/o 18, ES, NF
- Duluth: I-35 @ Ramsey St, NS, NEF
- Duluth: I-35 @ 14th Ave W, NS, NEF
- Duluth: I-35 1100' s/o MP 249, NS, SWF
- North Branch: I-35 1.1 mi n/o Hwy 95, WS, SF
- Sandstone: I-35 n/o Sandstone @ MP 192.6, ES, SF
- Pease (Milaca): Hwy 169 s/o Milaca in Pease, WS, SF
- Forest Lake: I-35 1.45 mi n/o MN 97, ES, SF
- Wright: HWY 210
- McGregor: HWY 210

Who We Are

Tamarack Water Alliance is a group of local residents and landowners working together with

others from across Minnesota to protect water and community health from the dangers of sulfide mining near our beloved lakes and wild rice beds, at the headwaters of the Kettle River and in the Mississippi River watershed. Visit our website [here](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/index.html) (<https://tamarackwateralliance.org/index.html>)

A proposal by a foreign owned mining company, Talon Metals/Rio Tinto to mine nickel and other metals near Tamarack in Aitkin County threatens the health of our communities. This kind of sulfide mining, especially in water-rich environments, has never been done without severe impacts to water and the health of those downstream. Mining here is also a threat to environmental justice and the long-term economic security of nearby native and rural communities.

Review our [community slide presentation](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf) (tamarackwateralliance.org/docs/TamarackMineConcerns-Consolidated.pdf) and download [informative flyers](https://tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html) (tamarackwateralliance.org/resources.html):

- Talon Mine Risks,
- Geology of Aitkin County,
- High Sulfide Mines Create Acid Mine Drainage,
- Nickel Not Needed for Future EV Batteries,
- Minnesota's Prime Wild Rice Lakes Under Threat,
- Minnesota Regulators Poor Record In Protecting The Environment,
- Eagle Mine Environmental Report & Saving Our Meager Nickel Reserves
- Prove It First! (The AFL-CIO Has Its Facts Wrong!)

We will be sending this monthly newsletter to keep you informed about this project, to share information and opportunities to act, and to invite you to gatherings where you can connect with others who share a passion for clean water and community health.

